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Hints for Teachers

Edited by B. L. Ullman, University of Iowa

[The aim of this department is to furnish high-school teachers of Latin with material which will be of direct and immediate help to them in the class-room. Teachers are requested to send questions about their teaching problems to B. L. Ullman, Iowa City, Iowa. Replies to such questions as appear to be of general interest will be published in this department. Others will, as far as possible, be answered by mail. Teachers are also asked to send to the same address short paragraphs dealing with teaching devices, methods, and materials which they have found helpful. These will be published with due credit if they seem useful to others.]

Latin for English

Three years ago an Iowa school superintendent wrote: "A boy will take 'Word Analysis' but dreads 'Latin.' Let us make Latin more practical—not drop it. We might call it 'Word Analysis' the first year."

Last spring a teacher wrote as follows: "I have for a long time felt the need of some course in our High School that would assist pupils in the mastery of English and it has occurred to me that an old-fashioned study of roots, prefixes and suffixes would answer this long-felt need. I wish this course to be of interest to pupils who find our courses in Latin too difficult and yet wish to understand English." I replied to the effect that in my opinion it was neither necessary nor desirable to develop a special non-Latin course, but that the teaching of Latin should be revised so as to meet the need suggested. What is good for some pupils is good for all. Experience has shown that Latin is very valuable for English, especially if attention is given to the correlation. Experience has also shown that courses in word study apart from Latin have done little good. If I am not mistaken word study used to be outlined as part of the English work in New York State but was dropped. It has recently been provided for in connection with Latin. It has always been true that when Latin and Greek teachers have succeeded with some phase of their work some one has promptly appeared to separate that successful phase from Latin and Greek. The talk about word study at present is a proof that Latin teachers are succeeding in making Latin practical. I agree heartily with the superintendent who wanted to make Latin practical. But it is not necessary to disguise it under another name. If Latin is properly taught students will not dread it.

If every Latin teacher will do all that is possible in making Latin valuable for English there will be no need for special courses. As I see it, it is a vital matter for us to do this and to discourage special courses in word study, especially when these are given, as they will be, by teachers who do not know a word of Latin and who are hostile to it.

Parallels

Even the newspaper "comics," most modern of "literary" forms and most potent in their influence, seem to borrow from the Classics. One of them recently showed a callow youth philosophizing on the queerness of life: "There's that fat Gwendolyn Sweet—she follows me around like a shadow—and I don't care one snap about her. Then take Lillums—she's one of the sweetest creatures in nine states—but you catch her throwin' herself at me—no siree." This is very much like Horace, *Carm.* I. 33:

Insignem tenui fronte Lycorida
Cyri torret amor, Cyrus in asperam
Declinat Pholoen: sed prius Apulis
Iungentur capreae lupis,
Quam turpi Pholoe peccet adultero.

Third Semester Latin

The practical point of this discussion is in the last paragraph, but it needs a bit of introduction.

It is a familiar fact that conditions in our high schools are not what they used to be. Vast numbers of students now go to high school who would not have gone beyond the eighth grade a generation ago. They are intellectually or at least linguistically inferior and they bring down the level of achievement. The enrichment of the curriculum has also brought a lower standard. There are more distractions than there used to be. These and other factors have in many cases slowed up the Latin work in spite of the improvement in text books and methods.

Even in the good old days it was often found difficult adequately to prepare students for Caesar in one year. We have long been hearing about "bridging the gap between the first year and Caesar." It may readily be seen that in our present situation the gap is still greater. Not even the beginning books whose one expressed aim is to prepare for Caesar have solved the problem. In many schools the only practicable solution is to increase the time given to the elementary work by putting some of it in the second year and to decrease the amount of Caesar to be read. It is true that in some schools the problem does not exist because of a combination of favorable circumstances, such as a long school year, long periods, good teaching, good students. In such schools it would be a crime to dilute the course of study.

There is no question that there is now a strong tendency to extend the elementary work as indicated. For example, the Syllabus for the schools of the state of New York requires thirty pages of easy reading for the third half year, including Ritchie's *The Argonauts*, Nepos' *Hannibal*, Caesar I 1-12, 23-29, 50-54, a total of only 24 chapters of Caesar.

The question now seems to be whether a maximum of three half years shall be devoted to elementary Latin and "easy reading" (such as *Fabulae Faciles*, *Viri Romae*, simplified Caesar) or whether two whole years shall be given to them. As between the two possibilities I am decidedly in favor of the former and opposed to the latter. For one thing I believe that three

half years are sufficient. Again we must remember that by far the greatest number of our students take Latin for two years only. It seems wrong that such students should never read a continuous passage of genuine Classical Latin. I am not pleading for Caesar. I should be willing to omit Caesar entirely if a satisfactory substitute could be found.

But the real purpose of this discussion is to be indicated in this final paragraph. Granting that in the third half year Caesar should be eliminated entirely or in part, of what should the work consist? In the first place there must be a thorough review of the vocabulary, inflections and syntax studied in the first year. Then there must be a continuation of the systematic methods of the first year in learning new vocabulary, inflections and syntax. This is a very important point. Finally there must be a considerable amount of "easy reading." The order indicated above is not, of course, intended to be chronological. The study of vocabulary and grammar will be taken up in connection with the reading. The problem is what to read. Ritchie's *Fabulae Faciles*, Lhomond's *Viri Romae*, and other simplified versions of Roman history have been used. This and other material is to be found in several second-year books now on the market. I feel rather dubious about *Fabulae Faciles*. Are they interesting and worth while in themselves, are the vocabulary and syntax important, and most of all, are the students who read them better prepared to read Caesar or other Classical Latin? Teachers who have tried this and other reading can help their fellow-teachers a great deal by writing me in some detail about their experience.

Virgil Notebooks

Miss Edith M. Sanford, of the New Haven, Conn., High School, writes:

For four years my pupils have made illustrated notebooks in connection with their study of the *Aeneid*. Before school begins I order sixty pictures for each member of my class. By ordering from both the University Prints Company and from the Thompson Company of Syracuse, a much greater variety of pictures may be obtained. Sixty pictures are required but I tell the pupils that they may buy as many more as they wish and usually they buy nearly twice that number. I have a list of about 250 pictures from which they make their selection. Two or three different methods of treatment are suggested but I tell them that they are free to use their own ideas, and I have never found two books in which the pictures were arranged in the same order or in which the subject matter was treated in the same way. For instance, I suggest that the first page may have upon it a picture of Calliope, of Parnassus, of Juno, or of Virgil. That suggests four different methods of approach to the story. Often, while we are discussing in class the thought of the passage read, I suggest a picture or a quotation or a story for the book. Each book of the *Aeneid* has a distinctive and suggestive picture on its introductory page; as, Book I, "Juno"; Book II, "Aeneas at the Court of Dido"; Book III, "Apollo"; Book IV, "Melpomene"; Book V, "The Discobolus"; Book VI, "The Cumaean Sibyl." Under each picture is a quotation which may be either Latin from the text or an English translation taken from Dryden's *Aeneid*. We set off a certain number of pages at the back of the book for the Latin quotations which are learned, for a certain number of lines of scansion from each book, for figures of speech with examples from the text, and for allusions to Virgil in modern English.

A few pupils have given short sketches of the lives of the artists but this is not required. Some of the students who have the talent have decorated the pages fittingly in water colors or pen and ink. On a page of narrative dealing with Juno we have a peacock; with Athena an owl; with Bacchus a stem of grapes; with Iris a rainbow, etc. A framed picture is given as a prize at the close of the year to the pupil whose book is adjudged best by three judges. My Cicero classes have made notebooks in somewhat the same way. I feel that it is exceedingly valuable work and would be worth while for the knowledge gained about pictures, even if we did not consider the much keener interest in the subject in general and the improved knowledge of mythology, which is so much clearer than it ever could be by the usual method of study.

Miss Marion A. Dean, of the Bennington, Vt., High School, writes:

The secondary school Latin course which seems especially to offer an opportunity for literary appreciation is that in Virgil's *Aeneid*. An adaptation of a notebook plan which I followed in college for the study of Horace works out very profitably in connection with the *Aeneid*, Book I. It can easily be used with the other books if time permits.

Book I lends itself to a division into twelve parts distinct enough to be called word picture groups. In the student's notebook each part may be headed *Pars Prima*, *Pars Secunda*, etc. Each division is then studied carefully and the results are written out under the following eight outline headings, with a brief explanation of each: I. *Argumentum*, an appropriate, original title, such as "The Wrath of Juno," "Juno's Visit to Aeolus," "The Storm," ending with "The Feast in Dido's Palace," which is the last of the twelve divisions; II. *Metrica*, the first verse with scansion indicated; III. *Construiones*, note made of the important grammatical constructions; IV. *Notanda*, myths, references, irregularities in scansion or syntax; V. *Verba Ardentia*, quoted passages from the "Aeneid"; VI. *Graphica*, names of illustrations; VII. *Similia*, imitations in English poetry and prose; VIII. *Me Iudice*, an original bit of poetry which may embody the main thought of the passage or may be a personal estimate or criticism. This need not consist of more than four lines; yet it will serve its purpose in giving the student a new means of expression and arousing interest and competition.

Hints for *Similia* are to be found in the notes of the best texts, while the teacher will supply examples from other sources as well as encourage students to search for them.

For *Graphica* the prints obtainable from the Perry Pictures Co. and others at small cost will add attraction to the notebook and introduce the student to well known pictures.

It is sometimes well to read through Book I before having the class begin the notebook work, although both may be taken up together successfully. The completion of a notebook of this type not only fixes in the student's mind mythical references, figures of speech, and irregularities in scansion and syntax, but impresses upon his mind the value of the *Aeneid* as a literary masterpiece.

The addresses of the picture dealers mentioned in the above and of others are given in the "Hints" for June, 1921. I have seen several notebooks by pupils of Miss Sanford and found them interesting.

Plays in English

In the "Hints" for last February I gave a list of plays in Latin suitable for high-school use. Below I give a list of plays in English, dealing with Classical themes, which may be used with high-school classes.

- Sutherland, Olive, *The Schoolboy's Dream*, *Classical Journal*, VII (1912), 181-83. Based on Caesar. A clever little play for two characters.
- Case, Effie, *The Conspiracy*. A short play (three pages) printed with two short stories in a pamphlet, *Between the Lines of "Cicero" and "Caesar,"* published by Effie Case, 807 Lyon Healy Bldg., Chicago, Ill., 25 cents. The play is based on Cicero's Orations against Catiline.
- Miller, F. J., *Two Dramatizations from Vergil*. University of Chicago Press. \$1.00, postpaid \$1.10. Contains two plays, *Dido*, *The Phoenician Queen*, and *The Fall of Troy*. Both are in verse. They have been great favorites and have been given successfully in a great many schools.
- Code, Grant H., *When the Fates Decree*. Published by the author, 69 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass., \$.75. Based on the story of Aeneas and Dido. Written in verse while the author was a high-school student. Successfully given in a number of schools.
- Levinger, Elma E., *The Return of Spring*. Typed copy from the author, 700 Grand Ave., Evansville, Ind. \$3.00. Deals with the Persephone myth. Said to be very beautiful. 25 minutes.

The Eldrige Entertainment House, Franklin, O., and Denver, Col., publishes the following: *Pyramus and Thisbe*, 25 cents. Based on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I have not seen it. *The Vestal Virgins*, 15 cents. A simple taper-drill for girls. Has been given in many schools.

Latin Composition

I was about to write a paragraph suggesting that it was desirable for the teacher to make up English sentences for translation according to the needs of the class when a letter came from a teacher suggesting the same plan, among others. If composition is to be an aid in strengthening weak places in grammar the plan suggested would seem to be the logical one. It is true that good composition books anticipate the weak places in some measure, but classes differ a great deal. The teacher referred to, Miss Myrtle Pullen, of the Britt, Ia., High School, writes as follows:

Instead of having composition one day each week, we read text steadily for five weeks with the exception of using a few sentences in sight writing, as the need arises. Then I devote the entire sixth week to composition, sometimes using sentences from the text, but usually making my own to suit the needs of the class. By doing this I find that the pupil retains what he learns much more readily as there is opportunity for stressing difficult points the second day, whereas in a week's time they are usually forgotten. The last lesson can well be used for summing up the most important points of the four preceding lessons.

Perhaps some one may think composition too dull to spend a week at a time on it, but I find that the interest increases as the lessons progress. The pupils frequently ask for an additional lesson on the following Monday. This they do not get, however, as I would rather leave them wishing for more than kill the desire with one lesson too many.

I should like to know if others have used this plan and if so with what success.